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Chief D/I

21 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Recommended Changes in Definitions of Communist Forces in South Vietnam

ATTACHMENT: CICV Order of Battle Summary, February 1968, Page 2

1. The Intelligence Conference in Honolulu in February 1967 devised the basic definitions for the various types of organized Communist forces in South Vietnam. Representatives of CIA, DIA, NSA, CINCPAC, and MACV attended, and concurred in the definitions. The Saigon Order of Battle conference of September 1967 amended the agreed-upon categories by abolishing the category "Irregular," under which the Guerrillas and Self-Defense forces were carried. The Self-Defense Forces, overt and secret, were then dropped from the Order of Battle. The other definitions and categories remained unchanged.

2. In the past year or so, intelligence analysts have discovered shortcomings, usually minor but sometimes major, in virtually all the definitions arrived at in Honolulu. This memorandum points out the shortcomings and recommends corrections. It uses as its basic text the "Glossary of Terms and Definitions" found on page 2 of the CICV Order of Battle Summary of February 1968 (attached).

Categories of Units

3. The OB states there are three categories of units: maneuver, combat support, and administrative service.

4. Maneuver Units are defined as "infantry, armor, security, sapper, and reconnaissance elements of platoon level upward regardless of subordination." The definition has been found wanting in two respects.

a. It does not specify that "maneuver units" are not meant to include guerrillas, who serve in the villages and hamlets, usually as infantrymen.

b. It does not take into account independent units smaller than platoons.

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5. To correct these deficiencies, it is recommended that the definition read as follows: "Maneuver Units include infantry, armor, security, sapper, and reconnaissance elements serving at district level and above."

6. Combat Support Units are defined as "fire support, air defense, and technical service units organized at battalion level and above, and not classified under administrative service. Separate fire support companies are classed as combat support." The definition has been found wanting in that it does not take into account "technical service" units smaller than battalion size attached to divisions and regiments. (The 9th VC Division, for example, has four companies attached to it which are not listed in the OB.) Companies and platoons are the usual size of these elements attached to regiments.

7. It is recommended that the definition be amended to read that Combat Support Units include "fire support, air defense units at district level and above, and rear service technical units subordinate to divisions and regiments."

8. Administrative Service Units are defined as "military personnel in identified COSVN, military region, military subregion, province and district staffs, and rear service technical units subordinate to these headquarters." The definition has been found wanting in four respects.

a. It does not take into account administrative service personnel subordinate to Fronts.

b. It does not take into account unidentified administrative service units.

c. It does not take into account administrative service troops subordinate to cities and vungs (areas).

d. It does not spell out whether out-of-country units are included in the definition.

9. It is recommended that the definition be amended to read that Administrative Service Units include "military personnel in COSVN, region, subregion, front, province, district, city and vung (area) staffs, and rear service technical units of all types subordinate to these headquarters. Such personnel include those in Cambodia, and in the border areas adjacent to South Vietnam of Laos and North Vietnam. They also include personnel subordinate to command elements outside Vietnam, when the personnel are serving in any of the above listed areas."

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11. Viet Cong Main Force Units are defined as "those military units which are directly subordinate to the Central Office of South Vietnam, a Viet Cong Military Region, or Subregion." The definition has proved generally satisfactory. However, Front subordination should be added.

12. Viet Cong Local Force units are defined as "those military units which are directly subordinate to a provincial or district party committee and normally operate within a specified VC province or district." The definition has been found wanting in that it does not take into account local force units subordinate to cities and vungs (areas).

13. It is recommended that the definition be amended to read that Viet Cong Local Force units include "those military units which are directly subordinate to province, district, city and vung (area) party committees."

14. The definition of North Vietnamese Army Units has been found satisfactory.

15. Guerrillas are defined as "full time forces organized into squads and platoons which do not always stay in their home village or hamlet. Typical missions for guerrillas are collection of taxes, propaganda, protection of village party committees, and terrorist and sabotage activities." The definition has been found wanting in four respects:

a. It is inaccurateⁱⁿ describing all guerrillas as "full time," since hamlet guerrillas, who outnumber villages by at least 2-1, are usually part time.

b. It does not sufficiently differentiate between village and hamlet guerrillas.

c. It does not mention secret guerrillas.

d. Its "typical missions" do not adequately describe the guerrillas combat role.

16. It is recommended that the definition be amended to read that "Guerrillas include platoons, squads, and cells, both overt and secret, directly subordinate to the party apparatus at village and hamlet levels. Village guerrillas are relatively well-armed and usually full time, while hamlet guerrillas are usually part time and only partially armed. Typical missions for guerrillas include collection of taxes, propaganda, defense of home areas, and occasional offensive operations."

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Unlike the guerrillas, they are ordinarily poorly armed and seldom engage in combat. Typical missions for Self-Defense Forces include propaganda, construction fortifications, the laying of booby traps and spike fields, and intelligence collection."

The Infrastructure

18. The Viet Cong Infrastructure is defined as the "political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek to control the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the party (People's Revolutionary Party) control structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus (Central Office of South Vietnam) at the national level, and the leadership of a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam), both of which extend from the national through the hamlet level." The definition is satisfactory as far as it goes, but is too vague to be used as a criteria for accounting purposes, because its clauses are open to broad interpretation.

19. It is recommended, therefore, that representatives of CIA, DIA, and MACV, in cooperation, perhaps, with ICEX in Saigon, draw up a set of specific criteria for use by strength accountants. Consideration should be given to the creation of a spectrum with the head of COSVN at one end, and a member of a hamlet Women's Liberation Association, say, at the other. The following accounting problems concerning the infrastructure's members need detailed discussions.

- a. Its strength by echelon. (COSVN, region, etc.)
- b. Its strength by functional element. (Security, Health, etc.)
- c. Its strength by rank. (Cadre, non-cadre, etc.)
- d. Its strength by job description. (Interrogator, typist, guard, etc.)
- e. Methods of accounting. (Compilation of field reports versus extrapolations from documents.)
- f. Its strength when used as a base against which attrition is applied.

20. The problems are important and complex. Seemingly minor decisions concerning wording and methodology have large numerical consequences. If, for example, it is decided to count as members of the infrastructure all those who are involved in its elimination, it is possible that the size of the

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(CICV)

3. (C) GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

a. Categories of Units:

- (1) Maneuver Units: Infantry, armor, security, sapper and reconnaissance elements of platoon level upward regardless of subordination.
- (2) Combat Support Units: Fire support, air defense and technical service units organized at battalion level and above, and not classified under administrative service. Separate fire support companies are classed as combat support.
- (3) Administrative Service Units: Military personnel in identified COSVN, military region, military sub-region, province, and district staffs, and rear service technical units of all types directly subordinate to these headquarters.

b. Classification of Units:

- (1) Viet Cong (VC) Main Force (MF): Those military units which are directly subordinate to Central Office South Vietnam (COSVN), a Viet Cong Military Region, or Sub-Region.
- (2) Viet Cong (VC) Local Force (LF): Those military units which are directly subordinate to a provincial district party committee and normally operate only within a specified VC province or district.
- (3) North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Units: A unit formed, trained and designated by North Vietnam as an NVA unit, and composed completely or primarily of North Vietnamese. At times, either VC or NVA units and individual replacements appear in units that are predominately NVA or VC at the command level.
- (4) Guerrillas: Guerrillas are full-time forces organized into squads and platoons which do not always stay in their home village or hamlet. Typical missions for guerrillas are collection of taxes, propaganda, protection of village party committees, and terrorist and sabotage activities.

c. Viet Cong Infrastructure: The Viet Cong infrastructure is defined as the political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek to control the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the party (People's Revolutionary Party) control structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus (Central Office South Vietnam) at the national level, and the leadership and administration of a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam), both of which extend from the national through the hamlet level.

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